

From: nealr@wt6.usdoj.gov@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/9/01 5:12pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement - as is it will kill things we use

Dear sirs,

I am an executive at a small wireless internet provider that operates in Iowa and Nebraska. I have recently read a review of the proposed Microsoft settlement by Robert Cringely - here is an excerpt from the article:

<begin excerpt>

-- Section III(J)(2) contains some very strong language against not-for-profits.

Specifically, the language says that it need not describe nor license API, Documentation, or Communications Protocols affecting authentication and authorization to companies that don't meet Microsoft's criteria as a business:
"... (c) meets reasonable, objective standards established by Microsoft for certifying the authenticity and viability of its business, ..."

So much for SAMBA and other Open Source projects that use Microsoft calls.

The settlement gives Microsoft the right to effectively kill these products.

<end excerpt>

Almost all of our 'back end' systems are run using the FreeBSD operating system. There is a product that runs on FreeBSD and other unix operating systems called 'Samba'. This package allows me to share printers attached to our unix system with the Windows laptops our sales force use. FreeBSD is a free system developed by volunteers and thusly it does not fit "Microsoft's criteria as a business".

The language in the settlement indicates to me that within a few months Microsoft will be able to make some miniscule change in their authentication protocol and effectively destroy our ability to make their products work with the systems we use to run our business.

All in all I am very disappointed in the proposed remedy - Microsoft giving "a billion dollars worth of software" as a fine is meaningless -

it costs them \$100k to print the material that comes in this supposed billion dollar deal and it adds insult to injury by directing this 'free' software to the public school system. This should be modified - let Microsoft give a billion in cash for hardware and the OS should be something other than their shoddy products.

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